

A
New Year's Gift

TO THE
PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN:

CONTAINING

THE RESOLUTIONS OF A SOCIETY;

IN WHICH

THE RIGHTS OF MEN, LIBERTY, EQUALITY, &c.

ARE SEPARATELY CONSIDERED.

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RESOLUTIONS

OF A

SOCIETY,

FORMED FOR THE PURPOSE OF UNDE-
CEIVING AND ENLIGHTENING ITS

OWN MEMBERS;

AND NOW HUMBLY OFFERED TO THE
CONSIDERATION OF THE PEOPLE OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

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P R E F A C E.

THE inhabitants of a certain district in Great Britain, were, for some time, much agitated with the political writings which have been lately circulated. By some of them they were called upon, to shake off that state of *slavery* and *oppression*, under which, it was insinuated, they now groaned; while others expressly maintained, that they were already *happy* and *free*.

In this situation they resolved to form themselves into a *Society*, to enquire into the truth of these contradictory assertions. But when the Society assembled, they soon found, that a general meeting was not a proper place for accurate enquiries. It was therefore determined, to devolve the business upon different Committees; whose opinions, if approved, should be converted into *Resolutions of the Society*.

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This mode of proceeding was attended with the happiest effects:—clear, and decided opinions, were soon established in the Society:—no longer were the members imposed upon by the false views of the *ignorant*, or the subtle insinuations of the *designing*:—and peace and harmony are re-established among the inhabitants of the district.

The Society do not wish to see these blessings confined to their own circle; and with the sincere desire to diffuse them, they now offer the following Resolutions to the *serious consideration* of their *fellow Citizens*.

RESO-

RESOLUTIONS of a SOCIETY, formed
for the Purpose of *enlightening* and *unde-*
ceiving the Inhabitants of a retired Di-
strict in Great Britain.

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS.

RESOLVED,

I. THAT they only are the friends of a
people, who represent to them, their *real state*
and *condition*.

II. THAT they are *not the friends* of a people,
who would persuade them, that they are *free*
when they are *slaves*, living under a *despotic*
Government.

III. THAT they are *not the friends*, but the
enemies of a people, who would persuade them,
that they are *slaves* when they are *free*, and live
under a *happy Constitution of Government*.

IV. THAT

IV. THAT this Society will do every thing in its power to gain a clear knowledge of the matters and things which divide the opinions of the Society, and to ascertain, with accuracy, the *true situation of these Kingdoms.*

V. THAT for this purpose the Society will divide itself into Committees, who shall separately consider RIGHTS OF MAN,—LIBERTY,—EQUALITY, &c. and that the opinions they report, if approved, shall be adopted as Resolutions of the Society.

Of Rights of Man,—Liberty,—Equality, &c.

OF RIGHTS OF MAN.

RESOLVED,

I. THAT the Rights of Man consist in the free enjoyment and exercise of his *life, liberty, and property*; whether this property has been acquired by the *exercise of his own powers*, or has
been

been transferred to him by those who have thus acquired it.

II. THAT the *Rights of Men* existed before all law, and are *unalienable*.

III. THAT the excellency of all *positive laws* and *political institutions*, is proportioned to the degree in which they *secure those rights*.

IV. THAT when laws have been established, which, from *long experience*, have been found *effectual* for those purposes, it is little less than *sacrilege*, to attempt to *destroy them*, or the *political establishments* that *support and enforce them*; for this is in fact destroying the *security* of the *Rights of Man*.

OF LIBERTY.

RESOLVED,

I. THAT the *Liberty of Man* in society, consists, not only in the *free exercise*, but in the *perfect security* of his *Rights*.

II. THAT in no nation, which has yet appeared on earth, have the *Rights of Men*, been so
B well

well established and secured, as by the Laws, and under the CONSTITUTION of Great Britain.

III. THAT in this country, though the Peasant cannot go into the Palace and pilfer from it what he wants, yet it is equally true, that no man dare step from the Palace and snatch from the Peasant, his life, his liberty, or the least iota of that independent property, which his industry has acquired.

IV. THAT tho' the King may prosecute the Peasant, yet, in this happy land, the Peasant may also prosecute the King: That a British Judge does not blush,—a British Jury are not afraid,—nor are British ears offended,—when they hear, THAT THE KING HAS LOST HIS SUIT; or, That an obscure individual has obtained a verdict AGAINST THE SOVEREIGN OF THE PEOPLE.

OF EQUALITY.

RESOLVED,

I. THAT the various ranks in Society are the causes of the wealth and prosperity of any people.

II. THAT

II. THAT to attempt to institute *only one rank in Society*, is as *absurd and contrary to the nature of things*; as to insist, that the human body shall be composed, *only of one member*; that it shall be *all Foot,—all Hand,—all Head,—or all Eye*.

III. THAT without *inequality of ranks in Society*, there could be no *regular supply of our various wants*:—no *interchange of property*:—no *commerce*:—no mutual accommodation or comfort among men.

IV. THAT in Great Britain, Equality reigns as perfectly, as it is possible, *consistently with the Rights of Man*, and with the *nature and existence of Civil Society*: There is nothing to prevent the son of the *meanest Peasant*, with character and abilities, sufficient for the purpose, to rise to be *Lord Chancellor of England*, and hold *the first office in the State*.

The following Resolutions from our RELIGIOUS COMMITTEE were adopted.

RESOLVED,

I. That those who would *level the ranks*, which *providence has ordained in Society*, are ignorant of the nature, of that order, which is universally established, under the Government of God, and which is *essential to true happiness*.

II. That the *different ranks* amongst men, are every where taken for granted in Scripture, where the *relative duties*, to *superiors*, *inferiors*, and *equals*, are *largely inculcated and enforced*.

III. That in heaven, where the greatest *love*, *perfection*, and *happiness* reign, there is also the greatest *order*, and the greatest *variety of ranks*.—There is a THRONE,—VARIOUS RANKS of angels,—and *orders*, even amongst the saints, redeemed from among men.—“ *For one star differeth from another star in Glory.*”

IV. That were we to suppose the Devil to rule on earth, ‘ *and he must be loosed for a little season,*’ his *hatred* would aspire at *destroying*
the

the established ranks in society.—By this means,
 ‘ every man’s hand would be raised against his
 ‘ brother,—Blood would touch blood in the land,’
 —And all the horrors of famine, tumult, and
 confusion would ensue.—‘ The last punishment of
 ‘ that nation, which has filled up the measure of
 ‘ its iniquity.’

History of the Combination of the words
 LIBERTY and EQUALITY in France.

It was immediately after the conclusion, of one of our most successful wars, that a Frenchman came to London, to admire the glories of the British Empire. He hastened to the court-end of the town, to see the palace of St James’s.—But it would be vain to attempt a description of his surprise, when in that *Palace*, he saw a *House*, far inferior, to many in the streets of London.

Some time after, in passing down the *Thames*, he was struck with the beauty and elegance of a *princely building*, that stretched itself along the banks of the river, ‘ No doubt,’ said he to himself,

self, ' this must belong to the King, or perhaps ' it is the residence of some *Prince of the Blood*.' He was soon, however, undeceived. It was Greenwich Hospital. On being made to understand, that it was built by the British nation to lodge and accommodate the *brave Tars*, worn out or disabled in the service of their country, he could not help comparing the *grandeur of the building now before him*, with the *meannefs of St James's*. The comparison gave him a more striking view of the English character. His imagination took fire, and *he exclaimed*: ' It is,—*It is indeed a wonderful people*, for THEY BUILD PALACES FOR THEIR BEGGARS, WHILE THEY SUFFER THEIR KINGS, TO DWELL IN AN HOSPITAL !'

This remark, so contrary, at one time, to all the ideas and feelings of a Frenchman, soon became current, when they wished to impress on the minds of each other, the *peculiar genius and spirit of the English nation*; and is said to have given rise to the connection of the ideas of LIBERTY and EQUALITY in the minds of Frenchmen,—Words, which they do not yet seem thoroughly to understand, or accurately to discriminate.

*Of Forms of Government, and of the
British Constitution.*

RESOLVED,

I. That an *hereditary Monarchy when simple*, is a bad form of Government; when *Elective*, it is worse.

II. That an *Aristocratical form of Government*, is a bad Government, when it is simple.

III. That *simple Democratic forms of Government*, even when delegated, are liable to many great and flagrant abuses, and that they have always ended in *Despotisms*.

IV. That the defects of these *simple forms of Government*, are rectified or counteracted when they are *all united in one complicated, and yet harmonizing system*; and that nothing but ignorance can excuse the *sophism* of taking it for granted, that they possess the defects when *thus united*, to which they are confessedly liable when *they are simple*.

V. That

V. That it is *absurd* to say that such a *complicated and harmonizing system*, is not a *political Constitution*.

VI. That Laws and Government are not to be judged of by their ORIGINS. If laws clearly define and effectually secure the civil rights of men;—and if a Government is well calculated to guard and protect such laws, we need not be anxious as to their origin—*their origin will not alter the nature of either*.

VII. That in judging of the *British Constitution of Government*, we have nothing at all to do with the *personal character of the Kings, —Ministers, —would-be-Ministers, —or Legislators who act under it*.

VIII. That many of the complaints and resolutions against the imperfection or corruption of these characters, may be well founded.

IX. That the truth of these corruptions, though disgraceful to individuals, is yet an *eulogy on that Constitution*, which admits of the exercise of the splendid talents of corrupt men, in the Government of the country, and yet, *from its construction*, keeps the liberties of the people free from being injured by them.

X. That

X. That the OFFICE, not the personal character of the first Magistrate or King of Great Britain, SUBSERVES THE MOST IMPORTANT PURPOSES.— It gives *energy to the executive Government*. By the influence and emolument it has to bestow, it *creates those PARTIES* in the Legislative Assembly, *which take off the defects of its simple form*; while, at the same time, it *thereby creates that check upon itself*, to which, in numberless instances, *it has been obliged to succumb*.

XI. That though in every other nation it may be wise in rulers, to discourage speculations upon Government, yet in this country, it is wise to encourage them; because the better we are acquainted with the *fixed and unalterable Rights of Man*,—the more we know of *human nature*,—and the more perfectly we understand the *British Constitution*, the more we shall *admire and venerate it*,—the more we shall perceive it to be the just object of *envy, jealousy and dread to our foes*,—and of the *warmest and most affectionate regard to every lover of his country*.

XII. That the *British Constitution*, is to be ranked among the *New*, and not *Old Governments*. It is, indeed, a *new Government* on the earth. There is no exemplar of it in ancient history; and it seems yet necessary, for men to
C learn

learn its excellence, that they may learn also to build upon its model.



R E F O R M.

RESOLVED,

I. That most of the complaints, which have appeared from Reforming Societies, are applicable, *not to the Constitution, but to the individual rulers and representatives of the people who act under it.*

II. That if there was not a *fountain of Honour and Reward* in a nation composed of *corrupt and imperfect individuals*, there could be no bringing men of great talents to the seat of Government, —nor would there be a sufficient spur to the exertion of those abilities, which are necessary, to the wise Government of a great people.

III. That the *collision of the parties* which arise, out of the peculiar construction of the British Constitution, forms a great bulwark and security

ty to the liberties of the people ; because those who are IN, are always watched with a jealous eye by *Opposition*, whose interest it is, to spy, and to proclaim, the least fault in those who rule.

IV. That, in Great Britain, no minister can rule for any length of time, without *possessing the confidence of the people*.

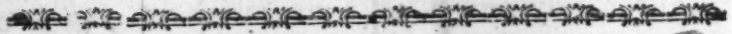
V. That when *the people themselves are in general corrupt*, great faults in their rulers will pass without punishment, and without much observation.

VI. That, of consequence, as the people themselves become pure, the corruption of their rulers must decrease.

VII. That, therefore, the best and most effectual means for *reforming the Government*, is for every individual, to begin with reforming himself.

VIII. That the idea of *continued and indefinite reformation* either of the CONSTITUTION or of the LAW is vain and illusory, springing often from discontent, and cherished by ignorance. That the rights of men are fixed, determinate, and invariable

variable things ; and that when they are once perfectly secured by human laws, these laws should be as fixed and unchangeable as the rights themselves.



OF TAXES.

RESOLVED,

I. That a *free and moderate nation*, living in the *midst of despotic and aspiring Monarchies*, must necessarily incur *great expences* in their own *defence*.—That these expences must be derived from the citizens, by means of taxes.

II. That the oppression of taxes is never to be estimated by the *amount of Revenue, collected by means of them*, but by the *ability of the people at the time, to pay them*.

III. That a few years ago, when our national debt and taxes were at the highest, Great Britain

tain *was no more oppressed with them, than she was at any period since the Revolution.*

IV. That on the contrary, while other nations were sinking under their taxes, we have been *rising superior* to ours,—and now we have the pleasure to see,—our *National Debt decreasing*,—our taxes yearly *diminishing*,—at the same time that every industrious man in the kingdom, from his increasing wages, *is better able to support them*, than he was before.

V. That the taxes which chiefly affect the poor, such as those on *candles and leather*, are *the same they were 70 years ago.*

VI. That in Great Britain, the taxes not only *affect the rich, as well as the poor*; but are so laid on, as that *the rich shall pay, by far the greatest part of them.*

VII. That the severe part of revenue statutes, can *affect those only, who wish to defraud the public.*—And it is as unreasonable to complain of this severity, as of the *laws against theft, robbery, or murder.*

CON.



CONCLUDING RESOLUTIONS.

RESOLVED,

I. That the notions of Liberty which prevail in North America, and which the *French* are now sporting with, were originally borrowed from Great Britain.

II. That a democratic form of Government is no new thing ; and that our ancestors, who were long engaged in the art, and who had deeply studied the science of Government, preferred our present Constitution, to the Republics of Greece and Rome.

III. That the murmurs which now prevail, unless they originate with disappointed and designing men, arise more from ignorance of, and insensibility to, the blessings we enjoy, than to any defect in the civil laws, which our ancestors purchased with their lives, or in that glorious
Constitution

Constitution of Government, which they cemented with their blood.

IV. That as it has been long the glory and happiness of Great Britain to *resist the efforts of the French nation*, to impose upon us, *Popery, Slavery, and Arbitrary Power*,—so it is no less our interest, to counteract the attempts *they may now make*, to introduce among us, REPUBLICAN AND LEVELLING principles, which would also prove destructive to OUR PROSPERITY AND HAPPINESS AS A FREE PEOPLE.

F I N I S.

1871
The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of Justice of the Peace for the year 1871.

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